(b) The Minister in his address to the General Assembly, explained the new initiatives taken by Government of India to develop tourism. He suggested that World Tourism Organisation may change its name to International Organisation to Promote Tourism (IOPT), and suggested that World Tourism Organisation should fund projects in developing countries. He stressed on the importance of tourism to reduce disparities of income and reduction of poverty.

(c) Various steps have been taken by Government of India to popularize the tourist destinations of the country and to attract foreign tourists. These include:—

- A multi media publicity compaign 'Incredible India' encompassing print, TV and Internet, to position India as one of the best tourist destinations of the world.
- Promotional initiatives, including participation in major tourism marts, hospitality to journalists, familiarization tours, promotion of publicity material etc.
- Infrastructural development in tourism circuits and major destinations.

(d) As a result of these initiatives, there has been a growth of 14.6% in the foreign tourist arrivals to the country during the period January to October, 2003 as compared to corresponding period of 2002. The remaining two months, i.e. November and December, 2003, being good tourist season for the country, the trend of current high growth rate of 14.6% is expected to continue during this period also. As a result, the tourist arrival in the year 2003 is expected to reach at all time high of 2.73 million.

Technical know-how to carry river water to remote areas

†777. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a project for taking Yangtze river water upto 1300 kms. by China is being carried out which is scheduled to be completed by the year 2010;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether Government have approached China Government in order to acquire technical know-how and other related information to carry on river water in the country to remote areas; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the success achieved so far?

THE MINITER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) No formal information is available in this regard. However, it has been reported in the Chinese media that the South-North Water Diversion project is designed to connect the Yangtze river with the three largest rivers in the North namely, the Yellow, the Huaihe and Haihe rivers.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Interlinking of Betwa and Parbati and Kalisindh Rivers

†778. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the projects relating to interlinking of rivers Ken to Betwa and Parbati and Kalisindh to Chambal have been sanctioned;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether information regarding the cost of construction of these projects and completion period has also been ascertained; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) Linking of Ken and Betwa rivers and Parbati, Kalisindh and Chambal rivers have been prioritized as the first two projects under linking of rivers project.

Feasibility report of Ken-Betwa link project has already been prepared by National Water Development Agency (NWDA). Central Water Commission has been directed to take up the preparation of its Detailed

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.